7217/70906



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants:

Nobuyuki Hara et al.

Serial No.:

10/673,729

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September 29, 2003

For

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Group A.U.:

I hereby certify that this paper is being deposited this date with the U.S. Postal Service in first class mail addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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Date February 12, 2004

February 12, 2004 1185 Avenue of the Americas New York, NY 10036 (212) 278-0400

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Prior to the initial examination of the above-identified application, Applicant respectfully requests that the application be amended as follows.

Amendments to the Abstract begin on page 2 of this Amendment.

Amendments to the claims are reflected in the listing of claims that begins on page 4 of this Amendment.

The Remarks portion begins on page 9 of this Amendment.